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Participation and involvement of the private sector in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the business engagement strategy

Participation and involvement of the private sector in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Report by the Global Mechanism

Summary

By its decision 6/COP.16, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) to continue engaging with the private sector and to work with it in promoting the implementation of the Convention and to draw on the private sector engagement strategy 2021–2030 when engaging in partnerships with the private sector. This report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the secretariat and the GM and presents conclusions with recommendations for the consideration of Parties at the seventeenth session of the COP.

The report is complemented by document ICCD/CRIC(24)/2 on resource mobilization, financial flows and Sustainable Development Goal 15.3.

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I. Introduction

1. At its sixteenth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) requested the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM), within their mandate and subject to the availability of resources, to undertake several private sector-focused initiatives. Requests included continuing to develop and improve best practices and guidelines that are relevant to addressing desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD). The GM was also requested to further develop the private sector engagement strategy for protecting, restoring and sustainably managing land and to encourage private sector support, finance flows and technology transfer. Moreover, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism were asked to accelerate efforts to support private sector engagement and promote innovation by:

(a) Implementing the Business4Land (B4L) Strategy with a focus on integrating sustainable land and water use decision-making into environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards;

(b) Continuing to develop the B4L Initiative as the main vehicle for private sector engagement in the implementation of the Convention;

(c) Identifying and promoting impact investment opportunities, including through fostering public–private partnerships, technology transfer on voluntary and mutually agreed terms, and innovative financial schemes to address resilience to desertification, land degradation and drought and promote Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and drought resilience;

(d) Nurturing innovative projects and their attractiveness to the private sector;

(e) Developing pilot projects to evaluate the viability and usefulness of innovative financing mechanisms, notably in new and emerging areas of interest and concern such as sand and dust storms, among others;

(f) Exploring options to scale out models developed or piloted by the Global Mechanism to other regions;

(g) Collaborating with the Group of 20, Global Land Initiative on the development of the land restoration industry;

(h) Facilitating, in collaboration with relevant partners and representatives of the private sector, the organization of the eighth SLM Business Forum on the sidelines of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

2. This document reports on the principal activities undertaken by the secretariat, the GM, and the Group of 20 (G20) Global Land Restoration in implementing decision 6/COP.16. It presents conclusions with recommendations for consideration by Parties at COP 17. Related financing and resource-mobilization actions are reported in document ICCD/CRIC(24)/2.

II. Eighth Sustainable Land Management Business Forum

3. The eighth Sustainable Land Management Business Forum is to be organized alongside COP 17 as the Business 4 Land Forum (B4L Forum). It will bring together business leaders, policymakers, government representatives, opinion leaders, experts, and other stakeholders to exchange views on the initiatives undertaken by business and industry entities to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and/or build resilience to drought.

4. The B4L Forum serves as a platform to raise the profile of DLDD among the private sector, to provide guidance and best practice on uptake of SLM practices, and to showcase the positive contributions that business and industry entities make to the achievement of LDN. The B4L Forum at COP 17 will accomplish this by:

(a) Showcasing best practices for reporting towards LDN and drought resilience, working together with relevant disclosure frameworks and initiatives, and driving alignment

across private sector standards and LDN target setting and monitoring, and drought resilience frameworks;

(b) Encouraging funding shifts towards SLM and drought resilience practices by highlighting viable business cases and presenting innovative financing mechanisms;

(c) Promoting peer learning for the adoption of SLM and drought resilience practices in business operations and value chains;

(d) Facilitating a public-private dialogue for a business environment that enables large-scale private sector contributions to LDN and drought resilience.

5. To reflect the growing recognition of the economic and ecological importance of rangelands, particularly in the context of the host country Mongolia and the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, a Rangeland Investment Forum will also be organized as an associated event. Organized by partners, the event will bring together investors, development finance institutions, governments, rangeland managers, and civil society to explore and catalyze private capital flows into sustainable rangeland management and restoration.

III. Activities undertaken to stimulate private sector engagement and the Business 4 Land Initiative

6. The B4L Initiative is organized around three pillars and the GM continues to encourage the private sector to manage risks and seize opportunities associated with DLDD in alignment with this approach:

(a) Business Operations and Value Chains: Adoption of SLM and drought resilience practices across business operations and value chains, land-related target-setting and disclosure of actions and impacts;

(b) Finance: Channeling of private sector financial resources towards LDN and drought resilience whether that be strategic investment or philanthropic contributions;

(c) Advocacy: Advocacy for stronger business actions on LDN and drought resilience, as well as a positive enabling environment to scale up private sector adoption of SLM practices.

7. To further advance the development of the B4L initiative, the GM, in coordination with the G20 Global Land Restoration Initiative, hosted a three-day strategic workshop. The workshop included field demonstrations on regenerative agriculture, hosted by the Fink Foundation and convened 40 business leaders, investors, corporate standard setters and technical experts to strengthen the delivery and strategic direction of the B4L Initiative in the lead up to COP 17 and co-develop activities and partnerships. Cross-cutting sessions further explored how to integrate the private sector into UNCCD flagship initiatives and strengthen enabling conditions for business engagement.

A. Business Operations and Value Chains

8. The GM has continued its work with corporate disclosures and target-setting standards. As part of these efforts, it has initiated a collaboration with the Science Based Targets Network (SBTN), the leading standard setter for science-based targets on nature. The partnership is mapping out alignment between government LDN targets and corporate Land Targets in a selected group of countries and companies and seeks to build out opportunities for aligned monitoring and implementation of public-private ambitions on SLM and restoration.

9. To further strengthen the inclusion of land and drought in ESG standards, the GM has developed a partnership with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). Through its Standards, the GRI provides the most widely adopted corporate disclosure framework. The partnership has worked towards building capacity among business entities to use GRI Standards to

identify, assess, and act on drought and land-related impacts while strengthening drought and land-relevant indicators and metrics in the GRI Standards.

10. The GM has also launched a corporate disclosures and target-setting expert group. The group serves as a technical advisory body, collaborating closely with the GM to facilitate alignment across corporate and UNCCD reporting mechanisms, and supporting the development of deliverables. A work session at the B4L Strategic Workshop produced an initial set of recommendations on harmonization across LDN and corporate frameworks, and it expected to develop another framework for drought resilience.

11. The GM provides platforms for private sector engagement in sustainable land and water management projects, including through the GGW Accelerator and GGW SADC. In the Sahel, the Accelerator supports investment-ready ventures by connecting green entrepreneurs with business leaders to refine models, strengthen financial strategies, and mobilize funding. In Southern Africa, the SA GGWI fosters private sector participation through initiatives such as PIDACC and the Greening Dryland Partnership. The GM hosted the Regional Capacity Building Workshop in Johannesburg (April/May 2026) to train stakeholders on designing bankable, gender-responsive projects and developing investment pipelines. Across both regions, these initiatives translate national LDN commitments into actionable projects, mobilizing private sector investment, partnerships, and innovation to generate measurable impacts.

12. The GM has collaborated with the Economics of Land Degradation initiative on the development of a private sector capacity-building module. This module supports businesses in recognizing land as an important asset class, while providing actionable advice to address land-related risks and opportunities across operations and sourcing practices. The capacity-building module, which will be piloted as part of the COP 17 agenda, has been designed for scale up and delivery across geographies and sectors.

13. The GM has been supporting the development and roll-out of the Global Rangeland Standards (GRS). This certification and monitoring system fosters voluntary commitments, traceability, and accountability, encouraging private sector entities to integrate good rangelands management and restoration practices into supply chains and corporate strategies.

14. The G20 Global Land Initiative (GLI), with support from the GM, has continued engaging with restoration companies, including empowering young entrepreneurs, and with mining industries, to promote a restoration economy. In February 2025, the G20 GLI launched a technical paper entitled “Global Land Restoration Economy: State of Play and Recommendations for Scale-Up”,[1] highlighting the potential of ecological restoration to drive economic growth and create sustainable jobs. In 2025, the Youth Ecopreneurs (YECO) programme with the International Trade Centre trained 225 entrepreneurs under 35 years of age as part of its second cohort. The G20 GLI also hosted a side event on the emerging restoration industry on the sidelines of CRIC 23 in November 2025. In relation to mining, a scoping mission was conducted in February 2025 to Mauritania to support the government with its artisanal gold mining sector. The annual capacity-building workshop on post-mining landscape restoration was organized in March 2025 in South Africa. In July 2026, the G20 GLI collaborated with the GM and the Business Council of Mongolia to organize a convening of international experts as well as national policymakers and mining industry leaders to synthesize isolated corporate sustainability efforts into an actionable and industry-wide joint pledge for COP 17. Furthermore, the G20 GLI and GM have collaborated on several outreach events to showcase positive practices and connect land entrepreneurs to new opportunities. More information on G20 GLI’s private sector engagement can be found in its Annual Report.[2]

15. The secretariat and the GM have continued to collaborate on the engagement of the fashion sector under the Fashion4Land umbrella, supporting the broader objective of mobilizing the food, feed, and fiber industries. Fashion4Land has worked towards

[1] https://g20land.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Global-Land-Restoration-Economy-report.pdf.
[2] G20GLI-Annual-Report-2025.pdf.

highlighting land issues within the fashion industry and hosts a dedicated Fashion4Land Forum at COP 17.

B. Finance

16. With EUR 2 million in seed funding from the Government of Luxembourg, the GM has framed the launch of the Drought Resilience Investment Facility (DRIF). As a blended finance vehicle under the Innovative Finance Pillar of the International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA), leveraging about USD 40 million in public capital, DRIF aims to mobilize up to USD 400 million in private investment for drought-resilient projects in lower-middle-income countries. DRIF will support investments in various sectors, including sustainable agriculture, water management, and nature-based solutions, helping to accelerate private sector participation by demonstrating viable investment cases and reducing risk. A dedicated technical assistance facility will support pipeline development, bankability, and post-investment capacity building.

17. The GM notes the emergence of blended investment funds supporting SLM and restoration, including the SLM Fund 2 by Mirova, building on the experience of the LDN Fund. The GM welcomes this positive trend as it proves the business case for SLM with the potential to further expand the market and continue to support the development of such initiatives across regions.

18. The GM continues to advance insurance tools addressing climate and DLDD related risks for smallholders, pastoralists, and ecosystems. SLM-linked insurance uses parametric triggers and land-use criteria to incentivize sustainable practices through premium reductions. The GM's approach follows a three-part logic: product design, country pilots, and policy integration.

19. With support from IDRA, the GM published a report on strengthening the resilience of smallholder farmers by linking SLM practices with parametric climate risk insurance.[3] The report sheds light on the shortcomings of traditional indemnity-based insurance models, such as timely payouts, high premiums, and increased administrative costs, calling for innovative, data-driven, and farmer-centric index insurance solutions to overcome these challenges.

20. The GM is conducting initial pilots to operationalize drought resilience/SLM-linked insurance solutions across regions. In Namibia, a large pilot is being developed with national authorities and technical partners to integrate SLM practices into drought insurance for smallholder farmers. In parallel, feasibility studies in Pacific Small Island Developing States, conducted in partnership with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, are assessing pathways to embed such approaches within existing microinsurance systems. Resources will be required to deploy these pilots. Additional pilot opportunities are also being explored in other regions through partnerships aimed at adapting the approach to diverse country contexts and value chains.

21. In collaboration with Ernst and Young and other partners, the GM is exploring the development of a Land Resilience Insurance Framework to integrate SLM and drought resilience with risk financing and investment approaches. The framework aims to address key barriers to investment in climate-vulnerable economies by combining risk reduction through sustainable land management and drought resilience practices, risk transfer through insurance solutions, and risk enablement to support resilient value chains and private sector engagement.

22. In an effort to make innovative financing vehicles more available, the GM has continued to explore the potential of carbon and resilience credits, as well as other market-based instruments for addressing land degradation and building drought resilience.

23. In order to help shape standards for "UNCCD-friendly" carbon credits, the GM published a white paper examining how voluntary carbon markets can better support land

[3] https://www.unccd.int/resources/reports/securing-land-and-livelihoods-integrating-sustainable-land-management-and-index.

restoration, drought resilience and sustainable livelihoods.[4] The publication outlines practical approaches to designing carbon projects that align with LDN principles and deliver measurable co-benefits, including improved soil health, strengthened climate resilience, and enhanced financial inclusion. It further highlights the need to improve accessibility and trust in carbon finance, particularly for vulnerable and land-dependent communities.

24. The GM is also exploring opportunities to contribute to the development of resilience credit approaches in collaboration with partners such as UNEP. Initial discussions have focused on the potential for piloting market-based mechanisms that link resilience outcomes to investment, including considerations around measurement frameworks, pricing approaches, and integration with existing initiatives like DRIF. Building on its experience with drought resilience financing and country-level pilots, the GM is assessing how such approaches could be tested in selected regions and aligned with broader efforts to scale resilience investments.

25. The GM is starting the process of establishing a mechanism to channel private sector resources towards sustainable land, soil, and water management, drought resilience and UNCCD operations. The B4L Foundation will operationalize private sector engagement by bridging businesses, philanthropic organizations, and implementation partners, while reducing administrative barriers and accelerating on-the-ground impact.

C. Advocacy

26. This biennium, a B4L Champions' Council was established as a high-level platform to drive private sector leadership on LDN and drought resilience and enhance private sector participation in the Convention. The Council convenes between 15-20 members, including business leaders from diverse sectors, demonstrating leading practices in land and water stewardship, a senior UNCCD representative, and a Chair representing the COP presidency, to ensure that private sector perspectives are considered in Convention processes. It serves as a forum for peer exchange, collective advocacy, and the co-creation of solutions that support the implementation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework. The Council has started articulating private sector commitments both through initiatives within member companies and active participation in global platforms.

27. Given the private sector's importance in scaling up restoration and sustainable management of agricultural lands, the GM requested the World Business Council for Sustainable Development to conduct consultations with agri-food businesses and relevant civil society organizations to identify mechanisms that unlock private sector contributions to LDN on agricultural lands. The recommendations have contributed to the guidance on the sustainable management of agricultural lands as requested in decision 19/COP.16. The draft recommendations can be found in the Annex to this report. The full report will be published in advance to COP 17 and made available to Parties. As part of this process, and recognizing the strategic value of soil health, the Secretariat and the GM is working with the World Economic Forum and its Global Future Council on Healthy Soils and Land, in the preparation of a White Paper to make the business case for investing in this agenda. The report will be launched during COP 17.

28. To accelerate private sector engagement in the implementation of the Convention, the GM undertook outreach during New York and London Climate Action Weeks, the WEF Annual Summit, ChangeNow, the Mongolia Economic Forum, and the World Living Soils Forum, positioning SLM and the B4L Initiative before a broad spectrum of business, finance, and policy audiences. These engagements raised awareness of the critical links between private sector activity and the goals of the Convention, while advancing the integration of sustainable land and water use decision-making into corporate standards. The Champions' Council amplified this outreach, leveraging the networks and influence of its members. Complementing this multilateral outreach.

[4] https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/carbon-co-benefits-scaling-carbon-finance-land-livelihoods-and-long-term.

D. Emerging Issues

29. The GM is developing the concept of B4L Hubs as national or regional-level platforms to strengthen private sector engagement in sustainable land, soil, and water management. B4L Hubs are hosted by qualified organizations, such as business councils, governmental bodies, or local initiatives, with demonstrated convening power, experience in sustainability or development, and the capacity to coordinate multi-stakeholder action. Hubs serve as focal points for mobilizing business participation, facilitating collaboration, and advancing activities aligned with UNCCD priorities. In 2026, several B4L Hubs are being established, with plans to expand the network in the future.

IV. Accreditation of the private sector

30. Following decision 5/COP.10, the secretariat has been facilitating the participation of representatives of business and industry entities in the meetings and processes of the UNCCD. The participation of these entities at the sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies has been ensured in two ways:

(a) Accreditation of the entities through the procedure established in decision 5/COP.10;

(b) Integration of the representatives of the business and industry entities within the delegations of umbrella private sector organizations (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, World Economic Forum, International Chamber of Commerce, Sustainable Fiber Alliance) or national institutions (chambers of commerce, associations of producers).

31. To date, around 70 business and industry entities have been accredited by the COP. The secretariat will be recommending the accreditation of additional entities for the consideration of the COP at its seventeenth session.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

32. There are several clear conclusions that can be drawn from the engagement of the GM, secretariat and G20 Global Land Restoration Initiative with the private sector:

(a) The private sector is a critical stakeholder group in the achievement of LDN, specifically in the domains of finance and implementation;

(b) To enable substantive private sector contributions to LDN, particularly in land cover classes with sustained economic activity, the right regulatory enabling conditions are needed;

(c) The B4L Initiative is proving to be a useful umbrella to coordinate private sector engagement across the secretariat, GM and the G20 GLI and other secretariat initiatives such as IDRA. The B4L Strategy and its pillars provide a focused yet flexible framework that accommodates a broad range of activities that facilitate private sector contributions to LDN. The B4L is also demonstrating that it can be the vehicle to facilitate the engagement of the private sector into drought resilience activities. Some initial work has been undertaken to give a coherent framework for the private sector to incorporate drought as a structural risk into their operations and value chains, and to facilitate its investment in technologies and solutions to build drought resilience. The collaboration with the IDRA has facilitated some of this activities and could contribute to continue generating innovations in this sector.

(d) Corporate disclosure and target-setting standards are emerging as a key lever to guide corporate actions towards LDN and drought resilience and facilitate better data availability on the impacts of businesses. To fully leverage the potential of corporate standards for the mandate of the UNCCD, it is important to align these with LDN and drought resilience frameworks and targets;

(e) Beyond disclosure and target-setting, there is strong interest from the private sector to engage in UNCCD-aligned public-private partnerships on land, specifically in the context of well-developed landscape initiatives with multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms;

(f) Innovative financing approaches, including blended finance, drought and SLM-linked index insurance, and market-based instruments, are emerging as critical enablers for scaling private sector investment in land restoration and drought resilience by reducing risks and improving project bankability;

(g) Despite growing momentum, innovative financial tools remain constrained by high perceived and systemic risks, limited project bankability, insufficient data and methodologies to measure land health and resilience impact, and weak enabling environments for private investment. Addressing these challenges will mean technical assistance and pipeline development, clearer standards and metrics, enhanced risk-sharing mechanisms, and continued partnerships to scale these approaches;

(h) Business-led advocacy, specifically through the Champions Council, is emerging as a successful strategy to increase corporate awareness of land and drought-related issues.

33. Recommendations for action by the GM, secretariat and G20 Land Restoration Initiative, within their respective mandates, to further develop engagement with the private sector:

(a) Further roll out the B4L Strategy across its three pillars, encouraging business and industry entities to make contributions to LDN and drought resilience;

(b) Explore complementarities between corporate disclosure standards and the Future Strategic Framework of the UNCCD to strengthen alignment, increase the UNCCD's relevance to the private sector, and facilitate private sector contributions to LDN and drought resilience;

(c) Drive alignment across public and private target-setting on land, including through joint monitoring and implementation frameworks;

(d) Continue engaging with relevant partners to consolidate private sector recommendations on the enabling conditions that allow scaling of private sector-led SLM and drought resilience practices;

(e) Explore, together with interested Parties and national businesses, how the private sector recommendations on agricultural lands may be operationalized at the national level to scale private sector contributions to LDN in agricultural lands;

(f) Further develop pathways for private sector entities to contribute to UNCCD flagships, transformative projects and programs and other LDN-related landscape initiatives, streamlining private sector engagement, notably in new and emerging areas of interest and concern such as rangelands, sand and dust storms, and other priorities identified by Parties;

(g) Continue to build conditions to facilitate the engagement of private sector into drought resilience activities, cooperating with IDRA, and facilitating blended finance approaches, including through mechanisms such as DRIF, to demonstrate drought resilience and SLM as an investable asset class and mobilize private capital.

Annex

Policies for Regenerative Landscape Action: A Business Perspective

Summary

1. Companies are increasingly investing in regenerative landscapes – contributing to avoiding, reducing and reversing land degradation and delivering climate, nature and socio-economic outcomes - but mis-aligned policy and incentive systems are preventing investment flows reaching the speed and scale needed. To scale investment policy makers can:

1. Enable credible and harmonized sustainability information to inform investment decisions

2. Align the measurement and accountability frameworks and data systems that companies, investors and policy-makers use for decision-making across conservation, restoration and sustainable land management. This will enable increased investment in sustainable land use by shaping both internal business decisions and capital markets.

2. Share costs and risk across public and private actors

3. Strengthen systems to share costs and risks fairly between public and private actors and across value chains. This will strengthen the economic business case for investments, ensuring commercial capital can be directed where sustainable land management is most needed. A key need is in redirecting finance towards farmers who bear the majority of the transition risks.

3. Build coherence to make sustainability easier for businesses to implement

4. Build coherence across policy, finance and data systems: across markets and jurisdictions, and between policy areas and thematic domains, from regenerative agriculture to conservation and restoration. This will reduce compliance costs and complexity for business, enabling them to respond quicker and implement strategies more effectively.

4. Work with business to co-design solutions

5. To drive progress across these three foundational areas, more effective public-private collaboration, backed by new forms of institutional architecture, is needed. Business can contribute most effectively where public-private dialogue goes beyond traditional “talk and agree” to “aligning, co-creating and delivering” on shared priorities.[5]

Introduction

6. Regenerative landscapes are inclusive land management approaches that integrate regenerative agriculture and forestry, conservation, agroecological approaches and ecosystem restoration. The objective of regenerative landscapes is to provide productive agriculture and land-use systems that regenerate natural resources instead of depleting them. By aligning stakeholders around shared goals and coordinated action at scale, landscape approaches reduce risk and costs, making regenerative and sustainable land-use scalable and attractive for corporate investment. This paper presents a business-backed, positive policy agenda to accelerate the transition to regenerative landscapes.

7. For governments, regenerative landscapes present a significant opportunity to deliver on the shared objectives of the three Rio Conventions, addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation. By investing in

[5] Reference to public-private dialogue moving from “talk and agree” to “aligning, co-creating and delivering” on shared priorities (annex source).

regenerative landscapes governments can strengthen national food security, promote resilience, and support prosperous rural economies.

8. For businesses, investing in regenerative landscapes can help to mitigate climate and nature risks, strengthen land-based supply chains' resilience, and capitalize on revenue opportunities.[6] Investment includes providing farmers with financial and technical support to assist the adoption of regenerative approaches that reduce costs, positively impact the environment, and improve livelihoods,[7] as well as investing in other nature-based solutions on and beyond farm that conserve and restore land.

9. Leading businesses are already investing in the transition, demonstrating ways to advance integrated solutions that deliver resilient agriculture and land-use systems. The Action Agenda on Regenerative Landscapes reports that more than 40 organizations have $9B+ in committed investment, covering over 210 million hectares of land.[8] However, to further scale business action, aligned accountability systems, equitable public-private risk sharing, and harmonized policy frameworks are essential.

Business can accelerate action with support of strong, science-backed policies and incentives that address supply- and demand-side barriers.

Call out box: Regenerative landscape contributions to Sustainable Land Management

Sustainable Land Management (SLM) can play a fundamental role in avoiding and reducing land degradation, achieving land neutrality by 2030, accelerating action on land restoration and promoting biodiversity conservation. SLM is explicitly recognized by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and is embraced by efforts under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Environment Assembly. Regenerative landscapes are strongly aligned with many of the core criteria of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) as they prioritize restoring ecosystem function, maintaining soil health, enhancing water stewardship, and sustaining long-term land productivity. This aligns with the UNCCD's mitigation hierarchy for achieving LDN and to Science Based Targets Network Action Framework, both of which prioritize avoiding land degradation, reducing pressures on nature loss through sustainable land management, and reversing degradation through restoration and rehabilitation of affected lands. By integrating rehabilitation, conservation, and sustainable use of land and water while strengthening local livelihoods, regenerative landscape approaches directly support the UNCCD's mandate, particularly the implementation of integrated strategies under Article 2 to combat desertification, reverse land degradation, and promote resilient, productive landscapes worldwide.

UNCCD hierarchy	*Objective*	*How regenerative landscapes contribute*
Avoid (Prevent)	Prevent new land degradation before it occurs	Maintain ecosystem function and soil integrity so degradation does not begin. Avoid ecosystem conversion including deforestation.
Reduce (Minimize)	Reduce unavoidable land degradation impacts through sustainable land management	Use water efficiently and improve water retention, especially in high-water stress areas. Halt land conversion and stop soil erosion. Minimise nutrient loss.

[6] Reference relating to business benefits of investing in regenerative landscapes (annex source).
[7] Reference relating to support to farmers in adopting regenerative approaches (annex source).
[8] Action Agenda on Regenerative Landscapes – figures on committed investment and hectares (annex source).

UNCCD hierarchy	*Objective*	*How regenerative landscapes contribute*
Reverse (Restore)	Restore degraded land to regain ecosystem function and productivity	Rebuild soil organic matter Restore high conservation value landscapes (peatlands, wetlands, grasslands) Rehabilitate degraded agricultural lands

Problem summary

10. There is growing recognition of the benefits of regenerative landscape approaches for soil health, biodiversity, climate resilience and livelihoods of rural communities, but significant investment is needed to fully capitalize on this. This includes providing financial and technical support to farmers to enable them to transition to regenerative agriculture profitably, while avoiding increasing farmer debt and protecting affordability for consumers. It also includes investments in Nature-Based Solutions such as riparian buffer zones and watershed restoration that increase resilience at landscape level. However, existing financial flows to sustainable land management are insufficient and farmers are continuing to disproportionately bear the costs. Even in Europe, where farmers receive the highest financial support for transition, only ~2–6% of total funding needs are currently covered.[9]

11. Private sector investment has a critical role in overcoming this finance gap but a number of barriers are preventing this from scaling at the speed required.

12. **First, the systems companies and financial institutions use for decision-making and external capital allocation – measurement and accountability frameworks, underlain by data systems - do not sufficiently incorporate key sustainability considerations.** Furthermore, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV), the process by which companies and partners track actions, measure impact and provide information on outcomes is constrained by high costs, inconsistent or sensitive farm-level data, and lack of harmonized data systems. This weakens the availability and credibility of information, limiting businesses' and financial institutions' ability to access risks and allocate capital to where it is needed.

13. **Second, the economic business case for investment is often weak, in particular where costs, risks and benefits are not shared fairly across the value chain and between public and private actors.** The often shared, long-term benefits of regenerative landscape approaches are difficult to align with short-term investment horizons and decentralized supply chains. This is exacerbated where subsidies incentivize unsustainable activities, undermining business efforts to support the transition – especially in the agricultural sector.[10] In this context, public finance needs to more effectively mobilize private investment across the value chain, while supporting farmers to ensure a just transition.

14. **Third, incoherence across policy, finance and data systems, including a lack of interoperability between different markets and jurisdictions, raises compliance costs, and delays business investment.** Uncertainty and fragmentation across agricultural, trade, innovation, and environmental policies reduces confidence, making it harder for companies to invest in long-term projects where returns depend on enabling policy environments. These factors disincentivize action on regenerative landscapes, as they limit businesses' ability to respond quickly to challenges.

15. Overcoming these business challenges represents an opportunity for governments to deliver on interconnected global priorities. For example, Sustainable Development Goal 15 is focused on life on land, emphasizing the need to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial systems. Similarly, the United Nations Convention to Combat

[9] Reference to coverage of total funding needs for transition in Europe (annex source).
[10] Reference to subsidies incentivizing unsustainable activities in the agricultural sector (annex source).

Desertification (UNCCD) countries have pledged to restore 250 million hectares of farmland by 2030. The Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework Target 2 aims to restore 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030, Target 10 seeks to ensure all areas under agriculture are managed sustainably, and Target 18 aims to raise at least USD 500 billion per year by repurposing harmful subsidies into positive incentives for biodiversity. Given the central role of business in land-use systems and scale of financing required, achieving global commitments will depend on mobilizing private sector investment.

16. With regenerative landscapes rising on political agendas, there is a clear role for public-private collaboration to play. An enabling environment comprised of robust accountability systems, aligned financial incentives, and clear, interoperable standards, helps to bridge the finance gap and de-risk private sector investment. Combined with long-term national strategies, this fosters innovation and transforms business models. Ultimately, it enables the private sector to accelerate collective action and collaborate across the value chain, supporting the expansion of regenerative landscapes.

Delivering a high-ambition transition requires stronger support and collaboration. This paper highlights that robust performance and accountability systems, aligned financial incentives and strengthened co-investment mechanisms, and harmonized policy frameworks can unlock corporate investment in regenerative landscapes.

Policy Areas

17. For businesses to scale regenerative landscape action, coherent policy approaches that build decision-useful, credible and transparent data systems, mobilize capital at scale and harmonize across markets and jurisdictions are needed. Governments can play a critical role in designing and implementing strategies that drive accountability, investment and confidence in regenerative systems by working with business to develop and co-design solutions.

18. The following three areas identify business needs and interconnected policy priorities across accountability systems, finance, and policy coherence that are foundational to more sustainable, resilient, and productive agrifood systems.

Policy Area 1: Enable credible and harmonized sustainability information to inform investment decisions

19. Align the measurement and accountability frameworks and data systems that companies, investors and policy makers use for decision-making across conservation, restoration and sustainable land management. This will enable increased investment in sustainable land use by shaping both internal business decisions and capital markets.

20. Business investment decisions, and external capital allocation through capital markets, are driven by information which is made available through measurement, accountability, and data systems. As such, aligning these frameworks is essential to directing capital to where it is needed and ensuring consistency, comparability, and credibility of sustainability outcomes. These frameworks need to be science-based, grounded in the realities of agrifood systems, and designed to incentivize outcomes on-the-ground.

21. Currently, fragmented standards, inconsistent metrics and siloed data systems are weakening the availability and credibility of information, making it less decision-useful for businesses, farmers, governments, and investors. This limits the ability of businesses and financial institutions to assess risk, price performance, and allocate capital efficiently, thereby reducing investment in sustainable land-use. Interoperable, science-based data systems that harmonize metrics, baselines and methodologies can reduce duplication and enable information to flow across policy, market and reporting requirements.

22. Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV), the process of tracking environmental actions, measuring their impacts and providing transparent, reliable information on outcomes, is an anchor for this alignment. MRV is currently constrained by high costs and inconsistent or sensitive farm-level data. While digital tools, remote sensing

and modelling can improve efficiency, they require standardization, ground-truthing and strong engagement with farmers and landscape-level actors to ensure credibility. The absence of robust, interoperable MRV constrains farmer participation and private investment. It also undermines countries' ability to demonstrate delivery on their international obligations, as effective MRV systems support governments to credibly track and report progress against international commitments under frameworks such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAPs) and Land Degradation Neutrality targets. Government investment into MRV as a public infrastructure can encourage private finance.

23. Policy can play a critical role by promoting alignment across measurement and accountability frameworks, supporting interoperable and science-based data systems that are scalable, practical and share data securely to provide decision useful information to farmers, businesses, investors and governments.

24. Actions for policymakers:

- Support the widespread adoption of a clear and simple core set of science-based metrics by integrating them into public policy frameworks for government-supported initiatives such as agricultural support schemes and landscape investment programmes. This will improve transparency and comparability of data on environmental outcomes, providing predictability to investors and other stakeholders involved in such initiatives.

- Strengthen accountability by ensuring disclosure of climate-, nature-, socio-economic-risks and opportunities, as well as the transition and adaptation plans and targets in place to manage these, is appropriately integrated into mandatory reporting and verification. This should be in alignment with established and emerging global frameworks and standards (e.g. International Sustainability Standards Board – ISSB) aiming for the integration of criteria into internal decision-making and financial planning.

- Invest in data and MRV systems for land-based systems, as key infrastructure and a public good (e.g., funding the development of digital infrastructure enabling data exchange; supporting regionally specific secondary datasets and emissions factors for commodities and production systems to address gaps in global databases); supporting the standardization of transparent, peer-reviewed and regionally applicable best practice models and protocols (e.g. contributing to efforts to align methodologies for Product Carbon Footprints); and consolidating data to ensure its consistency, accuracy and accessibility (e.g., leveraging existing land registries to provide consistent data on land use).

- Support farmers with measurement and/or collection of environmental and social data, ensuring they retain and own the data, minimizing the administrative burden, and ensuring they are compensated by public or private finance for their contributions (e.g., integrating sustainability and equity metrics into existing government-led landscape or farm-level surveys or data collection).

25. These actions will enable businesses to make data-driven decisions and scale investment with confidence that programs can deliver against corporate and producer needs. Especially at a landscape level, cost-effective and harmonised MRV and data systems provides multiple partners with a shared infrastructure for measuring and incentivising outcomes.

Case study 1. European Union (EU) on-farm sustainability compass: aligning farm metrics without reinventing the wheel

The European Commission is developing the 'on-farm sustainability compass', a voluntary EU benchmarking system to harmonize how farm sustainability is measured across environmental, economic, and social dimensions. The initiative responds to fragmented reporting requirements that increase costs and complexity for farmers. By standardising indicators, data protocols, and benchmarking methods, the Compass aims to enable interoperable, science-based sustainability data systems across Europe. It will build on existing initiatives, including public and private frameworks, such as the farm metrics frameworks emerging in Ireland's dairy sector. These policies can align measurement and accountability frameworks

while securely sharing practical, scalable data that provides decision-useful insights for farmers, businesses, investors, and governments, supporting the transition to sustainable agriculture.

Case study 2. ISSB sustainability reporting: Progress toward comparable data but more acceleration needed

The sustainability reporting standards developed by the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB), under the IFRS Foundation, represent a major step toward consistent and comparable corporate sustainability disclosure. Thirty-six jurisdictions are moving toward adopting or aligning with the ISSB Standards, helping investors better understand sustainability-related risks and opportunities across company value chains and over different time horizons. By establishing standardized metrics and reporting frameworks, ISSB is improving transparency and comparability for capital markets. However, early implementation shows that approaches to reporting remain varied; where countries adopt ISSB with different approaches it results in varied disclosures on risks, opportunities, dependencies and impacts. While ISSB is an important foundation, current reporting remains fragmented and will take time to produce decision-useful data at scale. Accelerating adoption, alignment, and data quality will be essential for markets to reliably allocate capital toward sustainability outcomes.

Priority Policy Areas: Corporate Accountability, Foreign Affairs (responsible for international reporting and diplomatic accountability) Reporting and Transparency, Taxonomy, Environment and Climate Policies, Competitiveness

Policy Area 2: Share costs and risk across public and private actors

Strengthen systems that enable costs and risks to be shared fairly between public and private actors and across the value chain, to strengthen the economic business case for investments and ensure commercial capital can be directed where sustainable land management is needed most. A key need is in sharing the costs of finance to enable farmers to transition.

26. High upfront costs, uncertain short-term returns, fragmented value chains, and a lack of policy-backed mechanisms to reward regenerative outcomes make the transition difficult to finance and scale on commercial terms. Greater coordination and collaboration across the value chain, and between governments, financial actors and the private sector, is needed to align resources and investments, enabling more targeted support for farmers undertaking the transition. Companies across the value chain, from input providers to retailers, sell to or source from the same suppliers and landscapes and have a shared interest in supporting their transition, yet there are only limited examples of businesses developing shared investment strategies, allowing them to share costs, with significant time and support needed to facilitate such coalitions and partnerships and matchmake deals.[11] Policy frameworks that incentivize public–private collaboration, collective investment, and blended finance can help to align public and private capital, accelerating the speed and scale of transition.

27. The following actions highlight ways to enable business investment at scale by reducing risk, improving returns, and creating clear incentives for farmers and other land-users.

28. Actions for policymakers:

- Create ambitious national investment strategies and coordinated policies that help farmers and other land-users to share transition risk with value chain actors through blended finance, combining public and private resources to support the adoption of regenerative practices at scale. This should integrate targeted grants to address upfront transition costs, farmer-accessible finance that incentivizes further on-farm investment and

[11] Reference relating to limited examples of businesses developing shared investment strategies (annex source).

coordinated technical assistance and training to support implementation and capacity building.

- Support collective action and cross-value chain collaboration by engaging with and championing action-focused coalitions (e.g., the Landscape Accelerator Brazil (LAB)) and coordinate public-private co-investment through relevant platforms (e.g., Resilient Agriculture Investment for net-Zero land degradation (RAIZ)).

- Strengthen policies that support the protection, restoration and sustainable management of land. This includes repurposing public support and incentives, including subsidies and market mechanisms, to advance regenerative landscapes and support farmers to manage the costs and risks of the transition (e.g., price support programs, crop insurance, and subsidizing research, development and technological innovations).

- Review the capital adequacy frameworks and other risk management regulations for Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), National Development Banks (NDBs) and private financial institutions (especially banks) in the context of the needed transition of agriculture and land use systems, to support lending and investments in the sector.

- Devote a significant percentage of public money to de-risk and catalyze private investments in sustainable land management and improve the effectiveness of such blended concessional finance by better advertising relevant private sector windows, simplifying administrative processes and assessing it according to private investments catalyzed and a core set of science-based metrics. In addition disclose the performance of past blended finance transactions, providing data that will enable investors to assess the potential risk-return profile of future investments in sustainable land use systems more accurately.

29. These actions will enable businesses to invest more confidently in supporting landscapes to transition to regenerative approaches. By absorbing early-stage risk and improving access to affordable finance, public support strengthens the business case for on-farm and landscape-level change and allows companies to move beyond pilots to scalable, long-term investments. Alignment of public and private capital helps businesses reward farmers and other land-users for delivering soil health, biodiversity, water resilience, and climate outcomes, while closing the financing gap that currently limits adoption at scale.

Case Study 3: Co-investment models to support agricultural transitions

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service within the United States Department of Agriculture,[12] demonstrates how public–private partnerships and co-investment can accelerate agricultural transitions. The program funds partner-led projects that direct conservation payments and technical assistance to farmers adopting improved land management practices on agricultural land.

RCPP requires non-federal partners, such as companies, NGOs, and producer groups, to provide matching contributions, aligning public subsidies with private capital. By sharing costs and absorbing early-stage risk, the program enables businesses to invest more confidently in supporting farmers to transition to practices that improve soil health, biodiversity, water resilience, and climate outcomes. This model strengthens the business case for on-farm change and helps move beyond small pilots toward scalable, long-term investments, closing financing gaps that often limit adoption at scale.

Priority Policy Areas: Agricultural Policy, NDCs, NBSAPs, Trade Policy, Corporate Sustainability & ESG, Sustainable Finance, Digital Policies, Innovation Policies, Farmer Incentives

[12] United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program (annex source).

Policy Area 3: Build coherence to make sustainability easier for businesses to implement

Build coherence across policy, finance and data systems: across markets and jurisdictions, and between thematic domains, from regenerative agriculture to conservation and restoration. Consistent incentives reduce complexity for business, enabling them to respond quickly and implement strategies more effectively.

30. Coherence across policy, finance and data systems provides clear signals to business leaders, investors and policymakers – it can reduce risk, improve transparency and enable capital to flow more efficiently across value chains and geographies. Policy needs to address diverse needs faced in landscapes, by farmers and other actors across different regions and take a holistic approach that considers soil health, water, biodiversity, livelihoods, and climate resilience.

31. In the absence of alignment, fragmented and inconsistent policy requirements increase complexity, raise compliance costs and delay business investment. Harmonized policies and regulations - aligned with international best-practice - support businesses in integrating sustainability outcomes into decision-making and allow investors to assess performance with confidence. It allows public and private actors to work toward shared objectives, resulting in business leaders, investors and policymakers measuring, reporting, comparing and rewarding positive outcomes, while also unlocking private finance at scale.

32. Actions for policymakers:

- Provide ambitious and stable long-term national policy strategies that send clear, predictable policy signals to investors and businesses, enabling long-term investment decisions.

- Align regulations and reporting requirements with international best practice to raise ambition and reduce complexity for businesses operating in multiple jurisdictions.

- Align policies and incentives that impact on sustainable land use across policy domains (e.g., within agriculture, forestry, environment, trade, health, and finance departments) by strengthening inter-departmental collaboration, reflecting the interconnected nature of land-use systems and delivering against multiple economic, social and environmental objectives.

- Improve coordination across the Rio Conventions and raise ambition and set coherent targets across Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), National Action Plans (NAPs), and Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets.

33. These actions will streamline compliance and reporting, reducing confusion, duplication and unnecessary cost for business – and ensure policy best enables corporate and investor action.

Case study 3. Landscape Accelerator - Brazil: Multistakeholder alignment on pathways for a regenerative transformation across Brazilian landscapes

The Landscape Accelerator Brazil (LAB) is a private sector-led, multistakeholder initiative under the global COP28 Action Agenda on Regenerative Landscapes (AARL). The LAB unites agribusinesses, consumer goods companies, financial institutions, Brazilian government ministries and civil society actors around a common mission: to develop shared investment plans that accelerate the regenerative transformation of key Brazilian landscapes, delivering net-positive climate and nature outcomes, economic benefits for producers and improved supply chain resilience.

A key pillar of the LAB is aligning public policy to underpin the transition. Brazil has a critical opportunity to align its policy frameworks to attract investment, mitigate risks for producers, and ensure the long-term adoption of regenerative practices. This includes harmonizing regulations, incentives, partnerships and research to create a stable ecosystem that empowers farmers with the tools and support they need. The country already benefits from a strong foundation of national and sub-national policies and regulatory frameworks, including the Brazil Forest Code, Plataforma Agro Brasil Mais Sustentável, Plano Safra and

incentive programs like Plano ABC+37 and Caminho Verde. However, there is potential to build on these programs to spur the adoption of regenerative practices even further. Brazil is well-positioned to lead and become a global model for scaling regenerative landscapes, by building on its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Plano Clima, and emerging biodiversity (NBSAP) and bioeconomy strategies.